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CIACO NID 81 [REDACTED]

October 23, 1981

POLAND: Divisions Within Solidarity

Solidarity's national leadership meeting today in Gdansk for a second day is divided over how to respond to the regime's tougher stance toward the union as demonstrated by the recent incidents in Katowice and Wroclaw. [REDACTED]

Union leader Walesa is counseling caution, but other more militant leaders apparently consider the incidents part of a deliberate attack on Solidarity and believe that a counterattack--perhaps a general strike--is necessary. Those calling for such a strike may argue that the union has to take this kind of action in order to preserve credibility with the rank and file and contain current widespread strike activity. The largest strike now under way is in the province of Zielona Gora where the local Solidarity chapter has launched an open-ended work stoppage, which may involve up to 150,000 workers. [REDACTED]

The regime may be reluctant to push too hard for a confrontation. The official media have played down the incident in Wroclaw and acknowledged the positive role of Solidarity in calming the situation. The local governor reportedly has also lifted the ban on public meetings and released those who had been detained, prompting Solidarity to end a local transit strike. [REDACTED]

Soviets Seeking Aid of Church

Moscow is continuing to solicit the Church's help in moderating Solidarity's position. Soviet officials reportedly told Archbishop Glemp in Rome earlier this week that if Solidarity is prepared to reach an accommodation with the government, Polish authorities would not seek a confrontation. Glemp is said to have pledged that the Church would urge the Solidarity leadership to restrain the union's activities and cooperate with the government. [REDACTED]

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The Soviet approach is consistent with recent indications that Moscow, while urging the regime to take a tougher line, would tolerate an independent trade union of a moderate character, at least for the time being. Moscow probably hopes these initiatives will isolate union radicals and project an image of reasonableness in its policy toward the Polish situation. Such an image also would prove useful in the context of President Brezhnev's visit to West Germany next month. [redacted]